

Promises Made – Promises Kept

When the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) was repealed, the Transit Division of the King County Department of Transportation (Metro) was faced with the loss of a major source of funding. Without additional revenues, existing service and planned facility and service improvements were scheduled to be cut.

In 2000 the voters of King County passed Proposition 1, which imposed an additional 0.2 percent sales tax and restored some of the funding lost with the MVET repeal. The attached chart compares the revenue generated by the added sales tax with what would have been expected from the MVET. Over six years, the cumulative loss in transit funding is projected to be about \$300 million, two-thirds of one year of the Metro budget.

Nonetheless the Transit Division has restored and grown transit service hours since 2000. It has delivered important park and ride lot capacity and, in concert with the Road Services Division, it has implemented a signal synchronization program that funds projects with cities across the county.

Service

- New commuter service from park and ride lots (eg. Routes 41, 212, 216)
- New connections between Eastside employment centers
 - Increased service hours on existing routes (233, 234, 249)
 - Added new service hours (eg. Rt. 245 connecting Kirkland, Overlake, Eastgate, Crossroads and Factoria employment sites; 236/238 connecting Kirkland to Woodinville/Bothell)
- More frequent service on key corridors
 - Much of Eastside network moved from hourly to half-hourly
 - Frequency improved between Renton - Tukwila - Burien; Aurora Avenue N.; Ambaum-Delridge; I-90, Eastgate-Bellevue
- New service from Sea-Tac Airport to Kent and Auburn
 - Will be proposed to Council for Sept. 2006
- Addition of 575,000 annual service hours
 - A total of 210,000 hours were added, which includes the I-695 replacement hours; soft economy and partial fare increase limited ability to add full 575,000 hours

Buses

- Expand the bus fleet to meet needs of enhanced service- net increase of 37 buses (2000 - fleet size =1,273; 2006 - fleet size = 1,310)
- New bus purchases:
 - 213 hybrids
 - 30 artics
 - 100 low floor standards
 - 100 trolleys refurbished
 - 19 Bredas converted to trolley-only

Facilities

- Improvements that make bus movement easier
 - \$1.47M awarded to 11 cities across the county to re-time 300 signals
- Devote \$5M to improve bus shelters and zones throughout the county
 - 300 new shelters; improvements total \$5.3M
- Relocate and improve Burien Transit Center as part of the city's downtown revitalization effort
 - In design, completion scheduled for June 2007
- Expand park-and-ride lots at Eastgate and Northgate
 - Eastgate – opened June 2004 – 1614 regular spaces
 - Northgate – opened June 2002 – 417 regular spaces, 75 park-and-pool spaces
- Construct new park-and-ride lots at Pacific Highway and Issaquah Highlands
 - Redondo Heights – opened May 2005 – 697 regular spaces
 - Issaquah Highlands – to open February 2006 – 1010 regular spaces
- New county-wide P&R capacity—over 3,600 new spaces

Other

- Continue the highly successful transit oriented development program.
 - Renton - Adding 150 new stalls at Transit Center, 5,000 sf commercial retail, and 90 affordable housing units, opened August 2001
 - Overlake Redmond – Adding 2,000 sf retail day care and 308 affordable housing units, opened August 2001
- Provide regional Smart Card technology for transit passengers
 - Efforts continue to implement Smart Card